

PARENT REQUESTS

Key Points:

1. DO NOT ignore the request.
 - Let the parent know that you have heard the request.
2. Does the request fall under special education policy or rules?
 - Even if a parent of a special education student makes a request, it might not be related to the special education services of the student.
 - Does the IEP team need to meet to discuss the request?
3. What is the district policy?
 - Make sure you are clear on what your policy is regarding the requested action.
4. What is the need that the parent is trying to meet?
 - Is the requested action appropriate to meet the need?
 - Is there another way to meet the need that is acceptable?
5. Use good communication skills.
 - Try not to be defensive or feel you have to defend the school.
 - Listen to what the parent is saying, not just what they are asking for.
 - Validate their concerns.
6. Respond to the request in writing.
 - Avoids the “you never responded” complaints.
 - Required under IDEA for SPED issues (CFR 300.503 Prior notice by the public agency; content of notice).
7. Don’t grant a request just to avoid a dispute with the parent.
 - This sets the tone for future interactions.
8. Make sure the focus is on the student and their needs, not the parent or the school.

Emotionally charged language to avoid

Phrases that have the effect of emotionally igniting parents are:

- "What you are not understanding is ..."
- "Let me try to explain this to you in a way that you can understand."
- "You don't understand what I am saying."
- "I'm not getting through to you."
- "I don't know what you want me to say."
- "Did you hear what I just said to you?"
- "What more do you want?"
- "Well, I deal with the student all day and what I see is ..."
- "I don't know if you are aware, but ..."
- "I can't imagine what you deal with at home."
- "What we do for your son/daughter, we must be able to do for the rest of the children."

Positive communicative phrases

Phrases that convey positive communication and intent include:

- "Thank you for coming today; we really appreciate parents like you who are so invested in their children."
- "It is so nice to see you again."
- "Your input is so important, feel free to interrupt or stop me if you would like to add anything."
- "I am having a little bit of trouble explaining myself; let me try again."
- "I want to thank you for that information, and I want to add some additional information."
- "I would be happy to ..."
- "We know that you are the expert on your child."
- "We realize that you see the same behaviors at home and were wondering how you approach these situations."
- "Was there anything else that you wanted to discuss or that we should review before concluding?"